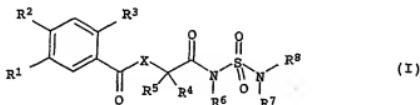


Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

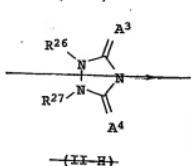
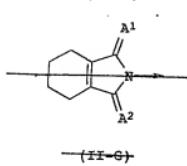
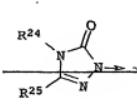
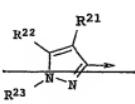
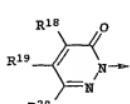
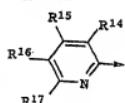
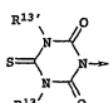
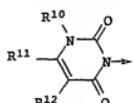
1. (Currently Amended) A 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid compound of the formula I



wherein:

X is oxygen or NR⁹,

R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formulae II-A to [II-H] II-D,



R² is hydrogen or halogen,

R³ is halogen or cyano,

R⁴, R⁵ independently of one another are hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl
or C₁-C₄-alkoxy, or R⁴ and R⁵ together are a group =CH₂,

R⁶ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl or C₁-C₄-alkoxy,

R⁷, R⁸ independently of one another are hydrogen, C₁-C₆-alkyl,

C₃-C₆-alkenyl, C₃-C₆-alkynyl, C₁-C₄-haloalkyl,

C₁-C₄-alkoxy-C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylthio-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

C₁-C₄-alkylsulfinyl-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

cyano-C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₁-C₄-alkoxycarbonyl-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

amino-C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylamino-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

di(C₁-C₄-alkyl) amino-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

aminocarbonyl-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

(C₁-C₄-alkylamino)carbonyl-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

di(C₁-C₄-alkyl)aminocarbonyl-C₁-C₄-alkyl,

phenyl or C₁-C₄-alkylphenyl or

R⁷ and R⁸ together with the nitrogen atom to which they are

— attached form a saturated or unsaturated 3-, 4-, 5-, 6-

— or 7 membered nitrogen heterocycle which may optionally

— contain one or two further heteroatoms selected from the

— group consisting of nitrogen, sulfur and oxygen as ring
— members, which may contain 1 or 2 carbonyl and/or
— thiocarbonyl groups as ring members and/or which may be
— substituted by one, two or three substituents selected
— from the group consisting of C₁-C₄-alkyl and halogen;

R⁹ is hydrogen, hydroxyl, C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₁-C₄-alkoxy, phenyl,
phenyl-C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₃-C₆-alkenyl or C₃-C₆-alkynyl,

R¹⁰ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl or amino,

R¹¹ is C₁-C₄-alkyl or C₁-C₄-haloalkyl,

R¹² is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R¹³, R^{13'} independently of one another are hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R¹⁴ is halogen,

R¹⁵ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R¹⁶ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylthio,

C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyloxy,

R¹⁷ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R¹⁸ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl or amino,

R¹⁹ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylthio or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl,

R²⁰ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R²¹ is hydrogen, halogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R²² is C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-haloalkoxy, C₁-C₄-alkylthio or
C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl,

R^{23} is hydrogen or C_1-C_4 -alkyl,

or

R^{22} and R^{23} together with the atoms to which they are attached form a 5-, 6- or
7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring which may contain a heteroatom
selected from the group consisting of oxygen and nitrogen as a ring-forming
atom and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three radicals selected
from the group consisting of C_1-C_4 -alkyl and halogen;

R^{24} is hydrogen, C_1-C_4 -alkyl or C_1-C_4 -haloalkyl,

R^{25} is C_1-C_4 -alkyl or C_1-C_4 -haloalkyl,

or

R^{24} and R^{25} together with the atoms to which they are attached form a 5-, 6- or
7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring which optionally contains an oxygen
atom as ring-forming atom and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three
radicals selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_4 -alkyl and halogen;

R^{26} is hydrogen, C_1-C_4 -alkyl or C_1-C_4 -haloalkyl,

R^{27} is hydrogen, C_1-C_4 -alkyl or C_1-C_4 -haloalkyl,

or

R^{26} and R^{27} together with the atoms to which they are attached form a 5-, 6- or
7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring which optionally contains an oxygen
atom as ring-forming atom and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three
radicals selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_4 -alkyl and halogen;

A^1, A^2, A^3, A^4 are each independently of one another oxygen or sulfur,

or an agriculturally useful salt thereof.

2. (Currently Amended) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where R² is [[10]] fluorine, chlorine or hydrogen.
3. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where R³ is chlorine or cyano.
4. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where X is oxygen.
5. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where R⁶ is hydrogen.
6. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-A in which R¹⁰ is C₁-C₄-alkyl or amino, R¹¹ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl and R¹² is hydrogen.
7. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-B in which R¹³ and R^{13'} are each independently of one another C₁-C₄-alkyl.

8. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-C in which R¹⁴ is fluorine or chlorine, R¹⁵ is hydrogen and R¹⁶ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyloxy.

9. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where R1 is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-D in which R¹⁸ is hydrogen, methyl or amino, R¹⁹ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl and R²⁰ is hydrogen.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where
R² is hydrogen, chlorine or fluorine,
R³ is chlorine or cyano,
R⁶ is hydrogen and
X is oxygen.

15. (Previously Presented) A benzoic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 where R⁴ or R⁵ is hydrogen and the other radical R⁴ or R⁵ is C₁-C₄-alkyl or R⁴, R⁵ are each methyl.

16. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising a herbicidally effective amount of at least one 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid compound of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt thereof as claimed in claim 1 and at least one inert liquid and/or solid carrier and, if desired, at least one surfactant.

17. (Previously Presented) A composition for the desiccation/defoliation of plants, comprising an effective amount of at least one 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid compound of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt thereof as claimed in claim 1 which acts as a desiccant/defoliant and at least one inert liquid and/or solid carrier and, if desired, at least one surfactant.

18. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling unwanted vegetation, which comprises allowing a herbicidally effective amount of at least one 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid compound of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt thereof as claimed in claim 1 to act on plants, their habitat and/or on seed.

19. (Previously Presented) A method for the desiccation/defoliation of plants, which comprises allowing an amount which is effective as a desiccant/defoliant of at least one

3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid compound of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt thereof as claimed in claim 1 to act on plants.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling unwanted vegetation or for the desiccation/defoliation of plants, comprising applying to plants, the habitat of the plants or seeds of the plants an agriculturally effective amount of a compound or salt of claim 1.